



The Arc Oregon

Oregon Special Needs Trust (**OSNT**)
Oregon Training and Consultation (**OTAC**)
Guardianship, Advocacy and Planning Services (**GAPS**)

February 7, 2023

To: Chair Dembrow and Vice Chair Weber

From: Em Braman, Executive Director, The Arc Oregon

RE: Support for SB819

Chair Dembrow and Committee Members,

On behalf of The Arc Oregon and our local chapters of The Arc throughout Oregon, I am writing today to express our **support for SB819**.

The Arc Oregon is an affiliated chapter of The Arc, the nation's oldest and largest organization for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). For 65 years, The Arc Oregon has advocated with and for people who experience I/DD and their families. Our vision is a world in which every person has the opportunity and support they need to participate fully in their community.

SB 819 Puts additional structure and safeguards in place to ensure that students with disabilities are provided with meaningful access to the same number of hours of instruction or educational services as their peers. This includes their access to FAPE, Free and Appropriate Public Education as guaranteed through Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Education and the access to education is a right and it sets the trajectory for a person's life. It opens doors to information, facilitates social development, provides skill building, and changes lives.

SB819 makes it so students with disabilities and their families no longer bear the burden attributed to lack of trained staff or resources. At The Arc Oregon we have heard from parents the reason they were informed that their child required a shortened school day was necessary due to

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lack of staffing. This can be a lack of nursing staff for a student with complex medical needs or this could be lack of an instructional assistant to provide 1:1 supports.

We, at The Arc Oregon, support the aspect of this bill around requiring parental consent as well as regular IEP team meetings to address the reasons for the shortened school day. The ability for a parent to revoke their consent to a shortened school day at any time provides parents with the confidence that they can approach the school and the individual education plan team and not be met with reasons it is not yet time for their child to reenter full school days. One parent shared with us that when she approached the school about getting her child back at school she was told that her child had yet to meet the criteria showing readiness to attend school.

For these reasons and all the other reasons shared by parents and advocates in the hearing I urge this committee to pass SB819 and get students back into the classroom.